

REMARKS

Prior to entry of the present Amendment, Claims 1-8, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 50 and 51 are all the claims pending in the application. In the present Amendment, claims 1-8, 41, 44 and 51 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. The outstanding rejections are addressed below.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 41 and 44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Mantell (U.S. Patent No. 6,189,993) in view of Billet (U.S. Patent No. 6,010,205); Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Mantell in view of Billet, further in view of Bain (U.S. Patent No. 4,521,786); and Claim 51 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as allegedly being anticipated by Mantell.

Without commenting substantively, Applicant submits that the above rejections are moot in view of the cancellation of claims 1-8, 41, 44 and 51 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Allowed Claims

The Examiner has indicated that Claims 38, 42, 45 and 50 are allowed. Since all the outstanding objections are moot, as noted above, Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Further, no new issues are presented that would require further search or consideration.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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